

under Colonel H. R. Roberts. On the 11th July, the Boers simultaneously attacked Uitval Nek and Waterval. At the former place, owing mainly to the defective dispositions of the Commanding Officer, the enemy gained possession of the pass and captured two guns, almost an entire squadron of the Scots Greys, and 90 Officers and men of the Lincolnshire Regiment, including Colonel Roberts who had been wounded early in the day. The 1st Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Godfrey, were despatched from Pretoria to strengthen the post, but arrived too late to extricate the garrison. At Waterval the 7th Dragoons were well handled, and our loss would have been trifling had not one troop mistaken the Boers for their own comrades. The regiment was supported in the early morning by one squadron of the 14th Hussars, one company of the 2nd Battalion Hampshire Regiment, and two Field guns, but owing to the numerical superiority of the enemy, it had to fall back to Derdepoort, which was strongly held.

21. On the 10th July, Smith-Dorrien, whose brigade had been employed in guarding the railway between Pretoria and the Vaal, was ordered to proceed by rail to Krugersdorp with the 2nd Battalion Shropshire Light Infantry, and 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders. On the 11th, he marched towards Heckpoort with these battalions, one company of Imperial Yeomanry, and two guns of the 70th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, his object being to collect supplies which the inhabitants were anxious to sell to us before the Boers from Oliphant's Nek could get hold of them. On reaching Zeekoehoek, 10 miles from Krugersdorp on the road to Heckpoort, he found the enemy holding a strong position across his line of advance, and an engagement, which lasted 6 hours, resulted in his withdrawal to Krugersdorp, with the loss of one Officer killed and two Officers and 35 men wounded. It had been my intention that the Scots Greys with two guns from Commando Nek should join Smith-Dorrien on his march towards Heckpoort, but this combination could not be effected, owing to the enemy's attack on the Uitval Nek.

22. As previously mentioned, Lord Methuen was ordered to Krugersdorp from Lindley on the 13th July, his force consisting of 1,200 mounted troops, 2,400 infantry, 12 field guns, two 5-inch howitzers, two pompoms, and nine machine guns. The movement was completed by the 16th, on which day I arranged for the column, in combination with the troops under Smith-Dorrien, to clear the road to Rustenburg and relieve the garrison there under Baden-Powell. Leaving Krugersdorp on the 18th July, Lord Methuen reached Heckpoort unopposed on the 19th, Baden-Powell advancing at the same time to Olifant's Nek with 400 mounted men and six guns. Olifant's Nek was occupied on the 21st after a short engagement, the enemy retreating hastily eastward along the Magaliesberg range. On the 20th the Boers under General Delarey destroyed the railway line near Bank Station, between Krugersdorp and Potchefstroom. I therefore directed Lord Methuen to leave a sufficient garrison in Rustenburg under Baden-Powell, and to return in the direction of Krugersdorp. The 1st Battalion North Lancashire Regiment, from Methuen's column, with two guns and 50 mounted men from Baden-Powell's force, was left to hold Olifant's Nek, while 450 Imperial Bushmen under Colonel Airey were despatched to repair the

telegraph line and clear the road between Rustenburg and Zeerust. On the 22nd July this party came into contact with a Boer commando, 1,000 strong, a few miles west of the Magato Pass, and after a protracted engagement succeeded in dispersing the enemy, with the loss on our side of one Officer and five men killed and 19 men wounded. On the 26th July Lord Methuen's force had reached Bank Station, and the same day Baden-Powell reported that several Boer commandoes, aggregating 3,000 men with eight guns, were concentrating on Rustenburg. Meanwhile a large convoy of supplies, escorted by Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, had left Mafeking for Elands River en route to Rustenburg, and Carrington with four companies of Imperial Yeomanry under Lord Erroll, and four squadrons of Paget's Horse, was ordered to proceed in the same direction with a view to reinforcing Baden-Powell.

23. At this time C. de Wet was still holding the hills near Reitzburg, and as it seemed likely that he would attempt to cross the Vaal and effect a junction with Commandant-General Botha to the east of Pretoria, I directed Lord Methuen to move on Potchefstroom, and thence take a position from which he could observe the drift across the river near Venterskroon. On the 28th July Lord Methuen engaged the enemy at Frederickstad, and the next day reached Potchefstroom. Smith-Dorrien was left at Frederickstad, where on the 31st he was attacked, but repulsed the enemy who retired on Ventersdorp.

24. While these operations were going on, Hutton, whose outposts were holding the Tigerpoort-Witpoort ridge east of Irene, was attacked by 2,000 Boers with eight guns at daybreak on the 16th July. On this occasion the detachment at Witpoort under Major Muun, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, consisting of three companies of that regiment and 60 men of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles with two pompoms, greatly distinguished themselves. By 3 p.m. the enemy fell back, and at dusk they were in full retreat eastward.

25. The time had now arrived when it was necessary to make a further move to the eastward along the Delagoa Bay Railway, but before this could be effected, it was necessary to clear the country to the north and east of Pretoria, where the Boers had been increasing in strength and boldness. A strong column* was, therefore, organized and placed under Ian Hamilton's command. This column left Pretoria on the 16th July, and on the 18th had reached Hammanskraal, 25 miles north of Pretoria on the Pietersburg Railway. A second column† under Mahon was concentrated on the latter date at Kameeldrift, 12 miles north-east of Pretoria. The head-quarters of the 11th Division were at Eerste Fabrieken, east of Pretoria, with the Guards Brigade 10 miles further east at Rhenosterfontein. French's force‡ was distributed near Witpoort and Rietvlei, 30 miles south-east of Pretoria, Hutton's troops being on

* An Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General G. G. Cunningham, D.S.O., consisting of the 1st Bn. King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Bn. Border Regiment, 2nd Bn. Berkshire Regiment, 1st Bn. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Hickman's Mounted Infantry, the Canadian and Elswick Batteries, two 6-inch howitzers, and 5-inch guns.

† 1,000 Mounted Infantry, 2nd Bn. Royal Fusiliers, 1st Bn. Connaught Rangers, a battery of Horse Artillery, two 4.7 inch guns.

‡ 1st and 4th Cavalry Brigades, Hutton's Mounted Infantry, 1st Bn. Suffolk Regiment, 2nd Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers, three batteries of Horse Artillery, one battery of Field Artillery, two 5-inch guns.